



Congressional fledglings get together: Reps. John J. Rhodes (Ariz.), Melvin R. Laird (Wis.), Jeffrey P. Hillelson (Mo.), Oliver P. Bolton (Ohio), Alvin M. Bentley (Mich.), Clifton Young (Nev.) and Elford A. Cederberg (Mich.), all freshman Republicans and members of the S.O.S.

At 2:32 p.m., March 1, Rep. Alvin M. Bentley, young Michigan Republican, lay on the floor of the House of Representatives bleeding profusely. With four other congressmen, he had been shot down by Puerto Rican nationalists.

That night, Washington's "S.O.S. Club" flashed word to its members that Representative Bentley needed blood for transfusions. To a man, they responded immediately.

Despite its distress-signal name and the hectic events of March 1, S.O.S. Club rallies are not usually so dramatic. The everyday function of the club is simply to keep its members well informed about what goes on in government. Its 15 members—including Representative Bentley—are fledgling Republican congressmen who meet weekly to share information and quiz higher-ups about the nation's business.

No one can get as lost in Washington as a freshman congressman. When the fanfare of President Eisenhower's inauguration died down, these young congressmen discovered this disconcerting truth. The government is a huge, complex affair about which it is difficult for an unseasoned hand to get information. So these freshmen began to meet informally and discuss their problems. Out of these talks grew the S.O.S. Club.

#### All for One

When a member sends out an "S.O.S.," all members are obligated to come to his aid. Rep. Bailey Merrill of Indiana, for instance, wanted a speaker of national note to kick off a fund drive for crippled children in Evansville; Rep. Douglas Stringfellow of Utah made the speech. Or a member might want to know exactly whom he should see in the Army Engineers Corps to whet interest in a harbor project dear to his constituents. If no one can answer the question, a member is appointed to dig up the dope before the next meeting.

At meetings, each member gets one minute to lay before the club his problem or his constituents' problem. Then the floor is opened for general discussion on all the problems brought forward. With most major committees of the House represented, S.O.S. mem-

bers are able to keep up with the status of every public bill introduced.

The club has neither chairman nor officers; the members take turns playing host in their offices. The host for the day also arranges (for the same week) a breakfast meeting to which some member of Ike's "downtown team" is invited as guest.

To most officials of the executive department, an invitation from 15 members of the House—regardless of their first-term status—is almost a command performance. These freshmen have talked with members of the President's Cabinet, the White House staff and high military and party leaders.

The club has shunned publicity. Little has been written about it—even when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was the club's guest at an early-morning session at the Capitol.

All members are under 40, except Representative Merrill, 41, whom they took in as "chaplain." Several of these young men already appear destined to bid for higher posts. Rep. Herbert B. Warburton of Delaware hopes to unseat Democratic Sen. J. Allen Frear, Jr., this fall. Another member, Rep. John J. Rhodes of Arizona—the first Republican elected to the House by Arizona since it became a state—is being mentioned as a future candidate for governor. Rep. Bob Wilson of California is another potential leader; he won his seat in

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what had been regarded as solidly Democratic San Diego, and is believed to have still bigger plans.

Three members are carrying on distinguished family political traditions: Rep. Oliver P. Bolton of Ohio, both of whose parents preceded him in Congress; Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen, Jr., of New Jersey, who can trace his ancestors back to Frederick Frelinghuysen, delegate to the Continental Congress; and Rep. Stuyvesant Wainwright of Long Island, N. Y., who is descended from Peter Stuyvesant, 17th-century "New Yorker."

#### Society of Statesmen

Other members of the S.O.S. Club include: Reps. Jeffrey P. Hillelson (Mo.); Clifton Young (Nev.); Joseph Holt and Craig Hosmer (Calif.); Elford A. Cederberg (Mich.) and Melvin R. Laird (Wis.). Representatives Cederberg and Laird started their careers early: The former was mayor of Bay City, Mich., at 30; the latter was a state senator at 24.

Besides its significance on the high seas, "S.O.S." has another meaning: Club members laughingly refer to themselves as The "Society of Statesmen." Older congressmen at first raised eyebrows at such goings-on by the precocious freshmen. But they have come to appreciate the efforts of these young legislators to understand their jobs.

#### IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF LOOK on sale July 13—



Grandma Moses

**LOOK on the Light Side**—Humor Editor Gurney Williams launches a new page feature, designed to make the reading day a little brighter.

**Race for the Moon**—Russia has laid plans to beat everybody else on earth in the rocket-sprint to the dead planet.

**Housewife Pat Nixon**—The wife of the Vice-President skips a lot of pink teas and evenings out to keep a lively and happy home for her family.

**Artists Exchange Views**—What does Grandma Moses write to part-time painter Dwight D. Eisenhower about those jobs he handles on the side?